



GREETINGS STEPPELAND DREAMING INITIATIVE AFICIONADOS!

August 2011

It was great to be able to meet some of you as we traveled the byways between Chicago, Green Bay, and New Mexico this summer. We were encouraged by the enthusiasm and interest people expressed in supporting indigenous worship music in the emerging Christian church in the Republic of Tuva.

As we work to develop a foundation of support and resources, two potential projects have emerged that we are especially excited about.

We would like to bring to full fruition the seeds planted by the team led by our HSI partners Bill & Robin Harris when they visited Tuva in 2008. When the indigenous Tuvans began responding to the Christian message (about 20 years ago), much of the momentum was focused around 7 fellows who had come to know Jesus while serving time in prison. These men not only composed worship songs in the Tuvan language, but had even begun to translate portions of Jesus' teachings into Tuvan. Sadly, when these men began to be released from prison the church was not prepared to handle indigenous forms in the context of worship, which resulted in these men being ostracized. The church lost a beautiful perspective on the nature of God, and these men were deprived of crucial Christian fellowship at critical moments in their walk of faith. When Bill & Robin began encouraging the Tuvans to use culturally appropriate music and arts in ministry many of them remembered the songs written by "The 7". Bill & Robin recorded rough demos of these songs as best as people could remember them along with a few freshly written songs. The spark of those initial recordings grew into the "Sounds of the Heart" festival that took place in 2009. At that festival many indigenous Christian musicians from all over Siberia were invited to perform for the Tuvan church to encourage them to develop their own culturally appropriate worship songs. Our hope is to now make a professional quality recording of these songs that have been developing among the indigenous Christian of Tuva. You can read more about this project at:



<http://www.heart-sounds.org/media/pub/1107.pdf>

and hear one of the songs at

http://www.youtube.com/user/HSIOM#p/u/5/E6_ZELoXlc

Additionally, one of "The 7" was Alexander Sarzhat-ool, a beloved bard of Tuva (kind of the Bob Dylan of Tuva), who was instrumental in inspiring the younger generation out of post Soviet despondency through his many popular songs and social work. Alexander died in January of 2011; he was only in his 50s and none of his music was ever properly recorded. We hope to inspire the music community in Tuva to put together a tribute album for Alexander Sarzhat-ool, with many musicians and groups contributing covers of Sarzhat-ool's songs. A project like this has the potential to be hugely popular. We hope to get some of Alexander's Christian worship songs on the project as well. This would provide a means to widely distribute the gospel message to indigenous Tuvans, as well as foster working relationships between the musicians within the church with the music community at large.

Both of these projects also have the potential to be a catalyst towards reconciliation in the church regarding the animosity caused by misunderstandings when the indigenous Tuvans first responded to Christianity.

We are thrilled to be able to be a part of what God is doing in Tuva, and just as we recognize that this is not "our project", we know that whatever part we have to play we can not accomplish on our own. We thank you for your encouragement and support and ask that you would continue to lift us up prayer so that we would be sensitive to God's leading in who he is bringing us together with to accomplish this important work in Tuva. If you feel God may be leading you to support this work financially please visit <http://www.uskhoomeizhi.org/Initiative/help.html> and if you have any questions or comments feel free to contact us at xoomeizhi@gmail.com or 417-763-0423.

By God's great grace & mercy,

The Grover Family :

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